

SOUTH PACIFIC COMMISSION

FOURTH TECHNICAL MEETING ON FISHERIES

Noumea, New Caledonia

(21 - 29 October 1970)

WESTERN PACIFIC FISHERIES STATISTICAL AREAS

A joint Working Party of the Indo-Pacific Fisheries Council and the Indian Ocean Fishery Commission was convened from 1-5 December, 1969, in Bangkok, Thailand.

This Working Party was established on the basis of resolutions, adopted by the First Session of the IOFC (Rome 16-20 September 1968) and the Thirteenth Session of the IPFC (Brisbane 14-25 October, 1968), which recommends that the Working Party be required:

"To define the statistical limits and sub-areas of the Indian Ocean, Western Pacific and adjacent seas, and sponsor the preparation of authoritative maps for statistical purposes, also to define smaller sub-divisions as the need arises taking into account specific and separate fish stocks."

It should be noted that such statistical limits, sub-areas and smaller sub-divisions will relate solely to fisheries operations and fish stock assessment and do not relate to territorial boundaries although they may happen to coincide with these.

The results of the First Meeting of the joint working party were published as FAO Fisheries Reports No. 85 (FIES/R85(E)), a limited number of copies of which are available for use at this Technical Meeting.

Earlier correspondence between the Technical Secretary of the Working Party and the SPC is attached to this Working Paper, and includes a tentative suggestion for SPC that the northern and southern boundaries of the main "Western Pacific" area, insofar as SPC is concerned, might more conveniently be the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn respectively since this measure would avoid "splitting" the Mariana Islands to the north.

The question is of course open for discussion, and this meeting may care to study the problem and submit recommendations for consideration by the Joint Working Party.

The following extract from a letter dated 25 September 1970 from the Technical Secretary to the Director, SPIFDA, is relevant:

"If I can develop the subject a little further, I would like to point out that the IPFC/IOFC Joint Working Party is at present attempting to develop proposals for the boundaries of

three major sea areas for which statistics of catch (and effort) should be reported by national fishery statistical phases to international agencies for the purpose of international studies. Once the boundaries of the three areas are agreed, work will commence on defining constituent sub-areas. At the same time, the definition of sea areas further East will be considered to be followed by consideration of the definition of their constituent sub-areas.

"Progress so far made is to be reported to the Second Session of IOFC (Rome, 26-30 October 1970) and the Fourteenth Session of IPFC (Bangkok, 18-27 November 1970) by the presentation of the report FIES/R85 (E), but it is not expected that the boundaries of the three areas will be finalized at these sessions. Consequently, the subject will need to be considered by the Joint Working Party at its next meeting when, after taking into account the views of the preceding sessions of IOFC and IPFC and replies to postal enquiries, firm proposals will be developed. These proposals will be presented to later sessions of IPFC and IOFC for approval, such approval being necessary before member countries can be asked to report their catch statistics broken down according to sea area of capture."

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Original text: English

SOUTH PACIFIC COMMISSION

NOUMEA, NEW CALEDONIA

Post Box No. 9

COMMISSION DU PACIFIQUE SUD

NOUMÉA, NOUVELLE-CALÉDONIE

Boite Postale No. 9

ORG 9/1

13th August 1970

In reply, please quote

PLEASE ADDRESS REPLY TO
THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

Mr L. Butler,
Chief, Statistical Services Section,
Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations,
Via delle Terme di Caracalla,
ROME,
Italy.

Dear Mr Butler,

Thank you for your letter of the 30th of July 1970 and for the copy of the report of the First Session of the IPFC/IOFC Joint Working Party of Experts on Indian Ocean and Western Pacific Fishery Statistics.

2. I feel that this is a question which could usefully be brought forward to consideration at the forthcoming Fourth Fisheries Technical Meeting to be held here in Noumea in October and possibly also by the SPIFDA Consultative Committee Meeting which will immediately follow the SPC meeting. Do you see any problem in us deferring a final view until after these meetings?

3. I have discussed this question with Mr Tubb, Director of SPIFDA, and our preliminary and very tentative ideas on the problem suggest that the area designated as the Western Central Pacific Statistical Area is conveniently bounded to the west as shown in Appendix VII of the Working Party Report and on the east by the International Date Line.

4. However, we are a little concerned with the problem of administrative jurisdiction in the various territories of the area; the lines drawn on your chart incorporate eleven of the SPC territories, namely Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, Guam, Territory of Papua and New Guinea, Nauru, British Solomon Islands Protectorate, Wallis and Futuna Islands, New Hebrides, Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony, New Caledonia and Dependencies, Tonga and Fiji. However, some of these territories have isolated atolls or islands which fall outside the boundaries suggested in Appendix VII and, subject to further consideration by the

two meetings mentioned above, we would tentatively suggest that the northern and southern boundaries might be the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn, respectively.

5. Within the near future we would hope to prepare charts with appropriate overlays showing the areas of administrative responsibility of the various territories listed, the area proposed in Appendix VII of the Working Party Report and the area serviced by the SPC.

6. I would appreciate your comments on our present tentative suggestions.

7. Meantime, to ensure that the participants at the meetings may be fully briefed on this question, I would be most grateful if you could send at your earliest convenience 25 copies of the Working Party Report for distribution and consideration at the meeting.

Yours sincerely,

(Sgd) Afoafouvale M.
Secretary-General

LB:nm

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cc: FI Reg (2)

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FIES Diary

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Butler

Yamamoto Bangkok Pouch

Subba Rao " "

FI 41/33.2

Dear Mr. Afoafouvale,

IPFC/IOFC Joint Working Party of Experts on Indian Ocean and
Western Pacific Fishery Statistics

IPFC Statistical Area

Thank you for your letter of 13 August (your ref. ORG 9/1). The question is far from closed and all contributions are of interest to the Working Party which, at the end of the day, must produce proposals that will require the approval of full sessions of IOFC and/or IPFC before national fishery offices can be expected to take cognizance of them when compiling statistics for international purposes.

As to your para.4, the Working Party has listed what it thought to be the factors to be considered when defining statistical sea areas, but it seems to me that your situation, which is not covered, could be met by extending para.7.2(v) of the report to include the situation where a boundary might cut through a group of islands having a common fishery and statistical system. In such a case local statistical practices will have to be considered. Incidentally I would like to impress upon you that these sea areas and their related charts will be for statistical purposes only and need not match areas defined for other purposes.

At this stage I can only note your reference to the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn and I will submit your views to the Working Party in due course. I do, however, think that it will be of great value to consider this matter at the two meetings you mention, since I assume there will be an opportunity to discuss the matter with representatives of national

.../...

Mr. M. Afoafouvale
Secretary-General
South Pacific Commission
Noumea, P.O. Box No.9
New Caledonia

fishery departments, who will also be responsible for the decisions taken when IOFC and/or IPFC consider any proposals the Working Party puts forward.

Lastly since the report of the Working Party is to be considered at the 2nd Session of IOFC (Rome, 26-30 October, 1970) and the 14th Session of IPFC (Bangkok 18-27 November, 1970) we are short of spare copies, but I am trying to arrange to have you sent 25 copies of Pages 6,7,8 of the report and the map. When discussing this extract you should take into account that the report is primarily addressed to IOFC and IPFC and that neither of these bodies have yet pronounced on it officially. I am particularly concerned that you are aware of this, as there may be some overlap between the representation at your meetings and the Rome and Bangkok meetings, and participants at your meetings, whose countries will also be represented in Rome or Bangkok, should be quite clear as to the situation.

I look forward to hearing further from you,

Yours sincerely,

(Sgd) L. Butler
Chief, Statistical Services Section
Fishery Statistics and Economic Data Branch